COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
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Universities and students affected by budget restraint

Ontario universities confident that postsecondary education review will point to need for substantial future investment in higher education

On May 15, the provincial government unveiled the 2004 Ontario Budget that was underscored by fiscal restraint for virtually all sectors, including postsecondary education. The budget noted that "a well-educated and trained workforce provides the economy with a clear competitive advantage" and that "colleges and universities play a crucial role in providing the knowledge and skills for Ontarians to succeed." However, it provided for only short-term measures pending the outcome of a comprehensive review of the postsecondary sector.

Former Ontario Premier Bob Rae will conduct the review, which is charged with creating a sustainable funding framework for the province's postsecondary education system – a system that is high quality, accessible and affordable, and that gives "Ontarians the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of income."

Ontario universities welcomed the appointment of Mr. Rae to conduct the review. Mr. Rae has maintained an active interest in postsecondary education and recognizes the value not only of high quality education but also of high quality research.

Budget measures for higher education, in the interim, include compensation to postsecondary institutions for a substantial portion of the revenue shortfalls from both years of the tuition fee freeze, as well as improvements to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), that will benefit some 50,000 students seeking higher education opportunities. OSAP improvements include a $20.5-million enhancement to OSAP in 2004-2005 and increased access to student loans through eligibility reforms that also better harmonize the Ontario and Canada student assistance programs.

Featured in the budget announcement was also the McGuinty government's commitment to honour the previous government's three-year investment totalling $980 million ($650.7 million of which was allocated to the universities) for the creation of over 21,000 new spaces at four colleges and nine universities, with $90 million being invested in 2004-2005.

The 2004 Budget will, however, present difficulties for Ontario universities and students. As the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) noted in its budget-related press release, some universities will need to introduce further austerity measures that will affect the number of courses available to students and the range of academic and administrative services that support the quality of their learning experiences.

We are pleased that the government will enhance OSAP and will provide funding for enrolment growth and compensation for the second year of the tuition freeze. However, the lack of certainty about how these funds will be incorporated into a longer-term funding framework creates problems for universities in budgeting for future years," said Richard Van Loon, Chair of Council and President of Carleton University.

Ontario universities have entered a decade of the greatest growth in enrolments since the 1960s, with the student population on campuses expected to swell by an additional 50,000 over this decade. In contrast, however, the operating grant per student for Ontario universities has declined by 24% from 1995-1996 to 2003-2004 in constant dollars. An increase in the Quality Assurance Fund, as anticipated in the 2003 budget announcement, would have helped to offset this decline.

"We are disappointed that the government has not increased the Quality Assurance Fund. This will further delay our moving from 10th out of 10 in provincial funding per student," said Dr. Van Loon.

Ontario universities are confident, however, that the impending Rae review, which is scheduled to report back to the government by early 2005, will indeed point to a need for reinvestment in Ontario universities.

Annual survey shows Ontario university graduates enjoy high employment rates

For the sixth consecutive year, results of the Ontario University Graduate Survey show that Ontario university graduates continue to enjoy high employment rates.

The 2003-2004 survey, mailed to individuals who graduated from Ontario university baccalaureate programs in 2001, found that their overall employment rate was 95.8% two years after graduation, and 93.6% six months after graduation. Their average salary levels were, respectively, $43,296 and $37,295, two years and six months after graduation. The survey results closely match Statistics Canada findings, which consistently report that university graduates enjoy the highest employment rates and average personal incomes of graduates from all postsecondary sectors.

The annual survey is conducted by the Ontario Universities' Application Centre on behalf of COU under a contract with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This year's survey drew a 28.2% response rate. Results can be found on COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca) and on the web sites of individual Ontario universities.

Ministry funds nursing education, clinical education projects

In March 2004, the Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (COUPN) received over $900,000 in funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as the second of three installments of a multi-year, $2-million commitment. This funding will enable COUPN to establish projects that promote innovation in nursing education to prepare practitioners for the changing health care system, as well as increase access to clinical education for nursing students and continuing education for working nurses and primary care nurse practitioners.

These projects will focus on summer internship programs, development of clinical placement databases, evaluation of COUPN Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner (PHCNP) education programs, development of PHCNP continuing education, and flexible scheduling of clinical opportunities.

In the 2004 Budget, the government also announced the establishment of a Nursing Faculty Fund, totalling $30 million over four years, to increase the number of post-graduate-level nurses needed to fill key faculty positions in schools of nursing at colleges and universities. The investment will fund not only the spaces for a 30% increase in enrolment in master's and PhD nursing programs, but also tuition reimbursement.

Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS):

Upcoming awards and events

This year's recipients of the OPAS-sponsored Excellence in Teaching with Technology Awards will be announced in late August and honoured in October at an awards luncheon in Toronto. The program grants two awards that recognize university faculty who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in using technology to enhance their teaching. The first, sponsored by CGI Group Inc., recognizes a program, course or module designed for university students; the second, sponsored by IBM Canada, recognizes a learning product designed specifically for people in the workforce. Each award is valued at $7,500.

Pamela Wallin, Canada's Consul General to New York, will be the recipient of the 2004 Visionary Award and the featured speaker at the 2004 Visionary Seminar, to be held on November 8, 2004. Ms. Wallin will present her address, *Leadership – the View from New York*, to an in-house audience of faculty, students and local business leaders at the University of Toronto. This year's seminar, the eighth in a series presented by OPAS and its industry partners, will be broadcast live via satellite and web cast to university campuses across Canada.

OPAS and its industry partners will present the sixth annual Summer Institute on Learning Technologies from August 15 to 19, 2004. Designed to assist university and college instructors who want to enhance their teaching, the Institute provides exposure to new developments, opportunities to exchange best practices, and hands-on experience with relevant technologies. Participants are selected by the vice-president academic of their institution. The event will be held at the Markham facilities of Sun Microsystems. For more details, contact Jan Dennis at (416) 979-2165 ext. 262.

Queen's University hosts conference on higher education issues

was host to a two-day conference in February 2004 on the theme of *Higher Education in Canada*. Organized by the university's John Deutsch Institute for the Study of Economic Policy and co-sponsored by COU, the conference examined such topics as key issues in higher education in the U.S. and Canada; the role of colleges and universities and returns on postsecondary education; higher education and regional innovation; the role of government in financing postsecondary education; the demographics of student demand and participation of different income groups; tuition fees and student assistance; and enhancing quality. Conference participants included COU Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues, university faculty, government officials, and representatives of organizations such as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. A number of conference papers are posted at jdi.econ.queensu.ca/Files/Conferences/ISE.html.

At the May 27 dinner held in connection with Council's last meeting for the academic year, retired members assembled for a photograph. Left to right: departing Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) officials Kevin Costante, who served as Deputy Minister, and Jessica Hall, who served as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Postsecondary Division. Back row (left): COU Chair Richard Van Loon and Kevin Costante. Front row (left): COU President Ian Clark, Jessica Hall, Univ. Vice-Chancellor Ken Paul and MTCU's new Deputy Minister Bob Christie.

Ontario Finance Minister featured speaker at 2004 Business Leaders' Forum

Greg Sorbara, Minister of Finance, is introduced by Carol Stephenson, OPAS Board Chair and Dean of the Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario, at the 2004 Business Leaders' Forum.

Greg Sorbara, Ontario's Minister of Finance, was the featured speaker at the annual Business Leaders' Forum presented by the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) on June 4, 2004.

Delivering an address entitled *Education, Knowledge and the Next Generation of Economic Growth in Ontario*, Minister Sorbara affirmed the role of universities in creating and sustaining economic vitality, noting that "it's not just a coincidence that the jurisdictions that have the strongest postsecondary infrastructure also have the best economies." Following the Minister's remarks, there was an informative question-and-answer period.

Some 170 invited guests from the university community, industry and government attended the 2004 forum, which was held at the Toronto Board of Trade. OPAS used the forum to announce a new partnership agreement with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which will allow members of the organizations to work together more effectively.

Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) continues to expand online capabilities, services

Applicants to any undergraduate or professional program at an Ontario university may now apply online, thanks to OUAC's completion of a multi-year initiative to web-enable all of its undergraduate and professional processing divisions. The last of these divisions, rehabilitation sciences, came on board in early 2004. Online applications offer considerable administrative benefits in terms of economy and efficiency, as they can be processed more quickly by fewer staff and reduce the print costs associated with paper application forms. In one division alone, OUAC has trimmed its print runs from 225,000 forms in 2003 to 110,000 in 2004, with a further 50% reduction expected in 2005.

The electronic option is also extremely popular with students. As of May 2004, the percentage of students seeking fall 2004 admission who have chosen to apply online ranges from 93.3% to 99.8% in the professional divisions (law, teacher education, rehabilitation sciences, medical schools). In the undergraduate divisions, 86.7% of secondary school students, 91% of non-secondary domestic applicants and 92.8% of non-secondary international applicants used the web to submit their application.

OUAC is developing a new online system that will allow applicants to accept or decline an **offer of admission** via the web. A working group from OUAC and seven universities will begin testing the new system this summer, which is expected to be in place for all undergraduate and teacher education programs by September 2004 in time for the 2005 admission year. OUAC is also collaborating with a number of Ontario universities to develop online application systems for their **graduate programs**. Several universities have also expressed interest in online application processing for their **part-time and internal applicants**.

"A Strong Ontario Needs Strong Universities"

Public awareness initiative draws attention to importance of universities

Ontario universities joined the public debate on provincial spending priorities, initiated by the government in the months leading up to the 2004 Budget, with newspaper and radio ads aimed at bringing home the message that "a strong Ontario needs strong universities."

COU's message was rolled out over the course of February and March in all communities that are home to an Ontario university and appeared twice as a full-page advertisement in March editions of the *Globe and Mail*. Universities have also written about or run the ad in their campus communication vehicles. (An abridged version of the print ad is reproduced below.)

The goal was to make Ontarians aware that strong universities are central to the achievement of the five priorities proposed by the government in its Budget Town Hall 2004 consultation process – but that Ontario is unlikely to meet these goals without increased investment in its universities.

The media initiative complements the ongoing efforts of Ontario universities to call attention to the facts and figures that demonstrate the clear relationship between a jurisdiction's prosperity and its level of university investment. Ontario's per student funding is the lowest of all Canadian provinces and 40% lower than funding levels in public universities in the U.S.

A follow-up study by Ekos Research showed that more than four in 10 people considered to be a high ratio recalled advertising relating to Ontario universities as a whole over the past two months, and that fully half of these had a positive impression of the advertising.

The radio and original (full text) print ads can be downloaded from COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca).

Task Force charged with defining quality in universities and recommending ways to finance it

In 2003, COU established the Quality and Financing Task Force to define university quality and develop recommendations on how to effectively enhance and finance it. Chaired by McMaster University President Peter George, the Task Force has been reviewing the experience in Ontario and other jurisdictions, specifically examining the following issues:

- the measures currently being undertaken in Ontario universities to improve quality;
- how quality can be enhanced using existing resources;
- the indicators that will demonstrate improvements in quality;
- the benchmarks on quality to be reached by the system and the additional resources required to meet those benchmarks;
- the appropriate contributions required from all partners (universities, governments, students and donors) to achieve this target; and
- the most effective student assistance program to enable students to make the appropriate contribution while ensuring that they are not denied access for financial reasons.

The Task Force's deliberations, which will continue into the summer, will help to shape COU's recommendations on the optimum funding and student financing system for consideration in the government's upcoming review of postsecondary education. Dr. George presented an interim report at the February 2004 conference on *Higher Education in Canada* at Queen's University (see story on page 2). His address, *Ensuring Quality in Ontario Universities: Speech to the Higher Education in Canada Conference*, is available on the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca).

COUNCIL UPDATES

Queen's University Principal William Leggett stepping down

On June 30, 2004, William (Bill) Leggett will retire as the 17th Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, a position that he has held since 1994. Concurrent with his principalship, he was a Professor in the university's Department of Biology.

Prior to his appointment at Queen's, Dr. Leggett served as Chair of the Department of Biology, then Dean of Science and ultimately Vice-Principal (Academic) at McGill University. From 1989 to 1991, he headed the Ocean Production Enhancement Network, a $25-million Federal Centres of Excellence Program. At Queen's, he continued to direct a major research team in this area.

His achievements have been recognized with honorary doctorates from four universities, the D.W. Webster Award of Merit, the Fry Medal of the Canadian Society of Zoologists, the Award of Excellence in Fisheries Education, the Distinguished Biologist Award of the Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs, and both the Oscar A. Sette Award and the 1997 Award of Excellence from the American Fisheries Society.

Dr. Leggett has served on the boards of several charitable foundations, has been a member of numerous government and private sector committees and commissions, and has served as an advisor in his field to governments and the private sector.

He is a graduate of Waterloo University College (BA, 1962), the University of Waterloo (MSc in zoology, 1965) and McGill University (PhD in zoology, 1969).

Dr. Leggett will be succeeded by Karen Hitchcock, former President of the University of Albany in New York.

Third edition of university research "success stories" published

The Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR), in association with COU, has published its third compilation of success stories illustrating the diverse range of government-supported research underway at Ontario universities and how such research is contributing to our economic, social, cultural and intellectual development. Released in spring 2004, *A Sampling of Success Stories of Federal and Provincial Investment in University Research* can be found on COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca), along with the 2002 and 2003 editions that focused on provincially and federally supported research, respectively.

Industry Canada, federal research funding agencies represented at annual OCUR meeting

On April 1, 2004, the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR) held its annual meeting in Ottawa to consult with government officials and heads of the major federal research funding agencies. Discussion focused on Canada's innovation agenda and federal plans to support research, the role of the newly appointed Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, Dr. Arthur Carty, and the investment priorities of the funding agencies. Government guests were Jean-Claude Villard, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada; Tim Stupich, Manager, Science Policy, Industry Canada; and Dr. Tim McTiernan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The federal research funding agencies were represented by Janet Halliwell, Executive Vice-President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; Carmen Charette, Interim President, Canada Foundation for Innovation; and Dr. Mark Bisby, Vice-President, Research, Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Each year, one of Council's five regularly scheduled meetings is held at a member institution, the site of February's meeting was Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The dinner held on February 12 presented a welcome opportunity for Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues to extend their appreciation to Robert Giroux, President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) since 1995, who was retiring on March 31, 2004.

Prior to his AUCC appointment, Mr. Giroux was Secretary of the Treasury Board and Comptroller General of Canada, the culmination of progressively responsible positions in a public service career that spanned 34 years, with the last 13 at the deputy ministerial level. Mr. Giroux brought not only his extensive knowledge and expertise regarding public policy issues to the position, but also a solid understanding of the role of the university as a centre of teaching, research and scholarship.

Mr. Giroux will be remembered for his solid record of achievement, his commitment to universities, his judicious approach in dealing with difficult challenges and his invaluable contributions to COU.

Claire Morris assumed the presidency of AUCC, effective April 5, 2004.

In addition to acknowledging departing Queen's University Principal Bill Leggett at its year-end meeting in May, Council also bid farewell to eight Academic Colleagues: , Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University; , Department of Mechanical Engineering, Lakehead University; , School of Commerce and Administration, Laurentian University; , Department of History, University of Ottawa; , Chair of the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Ryerson University; , Principal of University College, University of Toronto; , Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Waterloo; and , Director of the Centre for International and Security Studies, York University.

Michael Fox

Bonnie Sturgis

Huguette Blanchet

Chad Gaffield

Sanjeev Bhole

Paul Peters

Alan Pinnington

David Dewitt

Report on university infrastructure needs submitted to government

In response to the government's discussion paper on Ontario's aging public infrastructure, COU recently submitted a report, *Ontario Universities' Infrastructure Requirements*, which details the deferred maintenance backlog for the current infrastructure, identifies future infrastructure requirements and presents some financing options. The report is available on the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca).

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